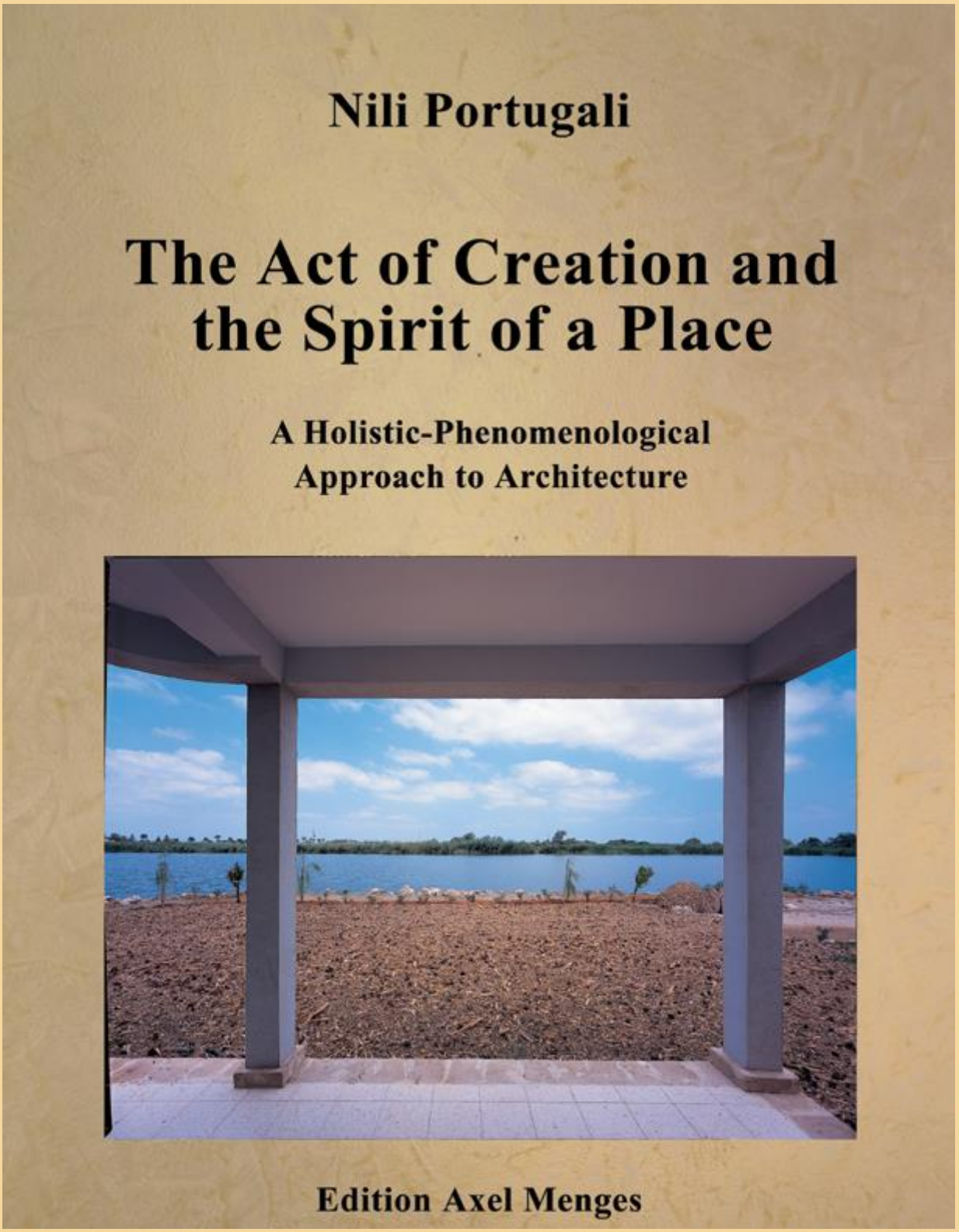
Nili Portugali

The Act of Creation and the Spirit of a Place

A Holistic-Phenomenological Approach to Architecture

Edition Axel Menges

NEW BOOK ON ARCHITECTURE



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Nili Portugali
The Act of Creation and the Spirit of a Place. A Holistic-Phenomenological Approach to Architecture
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In this book Nili Portugali presents her particular interpretation of the holistic-phenomenological world view in theory and in practice, a world view which has been at the forefront of the scientific discourse in recent years and which is closely related to Buddhist philosophy.

The purpose of architecture is first and foremost to create a human environment for human beings. The real challenge of current architectural practice is to make the best use of the potential inherent in our modern technological age.

Yet, modern society has lost the value of man and thus created a feeling of alienation between man and the environment. Contemporary architecture sought to dissociate itself from the world of emotions and connect the design process to the world of ideas, thus creating a rational relation between building and man, devoid of any emotion.

Portugali argues that in order to change the feeling of the environment and to create places and buildings we really feel »at home« and want to live in, what is needed is not a change of style or fashion, but a transformation of the mechanistic world view underlying current thought and approaches. Based on Christopher Alexander's basic assumption that behind human architecture there are universal and eternal codes common to us all as human beings, and that there is absolute truth underlying beauty and comfort, Portugali demonstrates how this approach, as well as her unique planning process stemming from it (based on the way things actually exist already on site), generates that common spiritual experience people undergo in buildings endowed with soul, no matter where or from what culture they come from.

That she demonstrates in a variety of projects, in relation to the physical, cultural and social reality of the place they were planned and built on, an Israeli reality which reflects a unique interface between the orient and the west, a cultural interface she personally represents.

Portugali is a lecturer at the faculty of architecture and town planning of the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa (until 2006 at the department of architecture of the Bezalel Academy of Art & Design in Jerusalem) and a practicing architect working in Israel for more than three decades. Her work has focused on both practice and theory. She studied at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London and at the University of California in Berkeley, and worked and participated in research with Christopher Alexander at the Center for Environmental Structure in Berkeley.

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About the Author

Nili Portugali is a practicing architect working in Israel for more than 30 years, and a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion Israel Institute of Technology. Until 2006 at the Bezalel Academy of Art & Design, Architectural Department, Jerusalem. Her work has focused on both practice and theory, and is tightly connected to the holistic-phenomenological school of thought.

She is a graduate of the Architectural Association School of Architecture (A.A), London (Diploma 1973). She studied architecture and Buddhism at the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A (1979-1981), and worked and participatd in research with Prof. Christopher Alexander at the Center for Environmental Structure, Berkeley California.

Portugali has won prizes in competitions, she lectures in international conferences and participated in various exhibitions in Israel and abroad. She has published many articles on architecture and her work is documented in professional magazines, in the press and on television.

Her firm is involved in a variety of projects in unique areas of historic or environmental sensitivity, in urban design, architecture, landscape design and interior design, disciplines she regards as one continuous system.

For more details

www.niliportugali.com

The book is valuable to architects, artists, scientists, philosophers and anyone who cares about the quality of the environment we live in.

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